

Message Text

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DRAFTED BY: IATF:JBROH-KAHN

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO CG CAMP PENDLETON IMMEDIATE

CG FORT CHAFFEE IMMEDIATE

INDIANTOWN GAP MI IMMEDIATE

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FOLLOWING REPEAT PARIS 27484 SENT SECSTATE DATED OCT 22.

QUOTE

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: SREF, FR

SUBJECT: INDOCHINESE REFUGEES

REF: STATE 235093, INDIANTOWN GAP 190143 Z OCT 75 PARIS
25587 AND 26985

1. SUMMARY. DESPITE PREVIOUS INDICATIONS OF SOME FRENCH FLEXIBILITY, THE QUAI OFFICIAL DIRECTLY RESPONSIBLE FOR THE INDOCHINESE REFUGEE PROGRAM MADE IT CLEAR IN A RECENT CONVERSATION WITH EMBOFFS THAT THE FRENCH ARE NOT PREPARED TO MODIFY THEIR ESTABLISHED GUIDELINES IN ORDER TO ACCOMMODATE US DESIRES FOR A GREATER REFUGEE INTAKE FROM THE US SYSTEM. END SUMMARY.
 2. ON OCTOBER 17 MINISTER-COUNSELOR GAMMON, IN COURSE OF CONVERSATION ON OTHER SUBJECTS, RAISED QUESTION OF INDO-CHINESE REFUGEES WITH DESTREMAU, SECRETARY
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OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS. HE MENTIONED PARTICU-

LARLY CONVERSATPON WITH DEPUTY SECRETARY INGERSOLL OF SEPTEMBER 2, AND LISTS OF REFUGEES WHO WANT TO GO TO FRANCE WHICH WE HAD PROVIDED FRENCH FOREIGN OFFICE. WHILE DESTREMAU COULD NOT PROVIDE DETAILS OF WHAT FOLLOW-UP ACTION FRENCH HAD TAKEN, HE DID SAY THAT HE HAD ASKED AMBASSADOR CHAYET, THE MAN DIRECTLY IN CHARGE OF THIS PROGRAM WHO HAD BEEN PRESENT AT THE INTERVIEW BETWEEN THE TWO DEPUTY SECRETARIES, TO ADOPT AS FORTHCOMING AND CONSTRUCTIVE AN ATTITUDE AS POSSIBLE. HE GAVE IMPRESSION THAT IF WE WANTED PRECISE INFORMATION WE WOULD DO BEST TO ASK CHAYET.

3. ON OCTOBER 20 CONSUL GENERAL AND TWO MEMBERS OF HIS STAFF CALLED ON CHAYET (WHO HAD BEEN AWAY ON VACATION FOR PAST THREE WEEKS) FOR GENERAL EXCHANGE OF VIEWS ON REFUGEE PROBLEM. CONSUL GENERAL TOOK ADVANTAGE OF THIS OCCASION TO PRESENT LATEST LIST OF REFUGEES IN U.S. CAMPS (INDIANTOWN GAP 182105 Z) TO CHAYET. WHILE SYMPATHETIC, CHAYET WAS NOT FORTHCOMING WITH REGARD TO THE LISTS. HE MADE IT CLEAR THAT FRENCH CONTINUE TO JUDGE EACH CASE ON ITS MERITS, ADMITTING ONLY THOSE WITH FIRM EMPLOYMENT OFFER OR SUBSTANTIAL SPONSORSHIPS BY RELIABLE INDIVIDUALS. AS JUSTIFICATION FOR THIS APPROACH, CHAYET CITED DISAPPOINTING FRENCH EXPERIENCE TO DATE WITH REFUGEES. FRENCH EXPECTATION, HE SAID, HAD BEEN THAT 20 PERCENT OF THOSE ADMITTED WOULD BECOME PUBLIC CHARGES, WHEREAS IN REALITY THE FIGURE WAS CLOSE TO 50 PERCENT. CHAYET ALSO STRESSED THAT THE SIZE OF THE INDOCHINA PROBLEM HAD SURPASSED ORIGINAL FRENCH EXPECTATIONS. REFUGEES ARE IN FACT ENTERING FRANCE AT A SOMEWHAT GREATER RATE THAN THE 1000 PER MONTH ORIGINALLY PLANNED, WITH SOME 6000 ALREADY IN FRANCE BY THE BEGINNING OF OCTOBER. AT THE SAME TIME, FRENCH NATIONALS HAVE BEGUN TO FLOW OUT OF SAIGON ON THE AIRLIFT AND THE GOF FEELS IT MUST TAKE THESE PEOPLE-- WHILE AT THE SAME TIME FEARING THAT THEY MAY IN THE END TOTAL 5000. WITH A TOTAL CEILING OF "10.000 TO 12.000" (CHAYET STATED THAT NO OFFICIAL FIGURE HAD YET BEEN ESTABLISHED BUT HIS WILLINGNESS TO QUOTE A FIGURE MAY FORESHADOW AN OFFICIAL FRENCH DECISION ON LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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THE SUBJECT), FRENCH SOCIETY MAY BE ALREADY APPROACHING THE LIMITS OF ITS ABSORPTIVE CAPACITY. THUS, THE HARD-HEADED APPROACH THE FRENCH ARE TAKING IS ESSENTIAL TO ASSURE THAT, AMONG THE REMAINING REFUGEES, ONLY THOSE WHO CAN BE SUCCESSFULLY ABSORBED ARE TAKEN IN.

ON SPECIFICS, CHAYET AT FIRST REITERATED THE OPINION PREVIOUSLY EXPRESSED BY ONE OF HIS SUBORDINATES (PARIS

26985) REGARDING THOSE REFUGEES ALREADY SPONSORED OUT OF THE US CAMPS (I.E. THEY WILL NOT BE GIVEN VISAS) HE BACKED OFF SOMEWHAT WHEN IT WAS POINTED OUT THAT, WITH THE CAMPS CLOSING IN THE NEXT FEW WEEKS, SOME REFUGEES MAY IN EFFECT BE FORCED TO LEAVE THE CAMPS BEFORE THEY CAN OBTAIN FRENCH VISAS. THE ESSENCE OF HIS POSITION REMAINED THE SAME, HOWEVER: EACH CASE CAREFULLY SCRUTINIZED ON ITS MERITS WITH ONLY THOSE HOLDING FIRM JOB OFFERS OR STRONG SPONSORSHIPS BEING APPROVED. ON DOCUMENTATION PERMITTING REFUGEES TO RETURN TO THE US IF THEY DO NOT SUCCEED IN SETTLING IN FRANCE, CHAYET SIGNIFICANTLY DEPARTED FROM THE POSITION PREVIOUSLY TAKEN, STATING THAT HE THOUGHT IT WAS AN "EXCELLENT" IDEA WHICH WOULD HELP BOTH FRANCE AND THE U.S.

EMBOFFS FELT CONSTRAINED AT THAT POINT TO NOTE THAT, IN AT LEAST ONE CASE OF WHICH THEY HAD PERSONAL KNOWLEDGE, LOCAL FRENCH AUTHORITIES HAD DENIED A WORKING PERMIT TO A REFUGEE BECAUSE HE POSSESSED SUCH US DOCUMENTATION. CHAYET REPLIED THAT SUCH THINGS COULD OF COURSE OCCUR BUT THAT THEY WERE AGAINST THE "SPIRIT" OF THE POSITION TAKEN AT THE POLICY-MAKING LEVEL. CHAYET CONCLUDED BY CONTRASTING THE US AND FRENCH EXPERIENCE, STATING THAT THE US REFUGEE PROGRAM IS RAPIDLY COMING TO A CLOSE, WHEREAS THAT OF FRANCE IS JUST GETTING FULLY UNDERWAY. HE ALSO STATED (AS HAD JEANNOT IN AN EARLIER CONVERSATION) THAT THE FRENCH HAD FOUND IT HARD TO SETTLE THE INTELLECTUALS AND PROFESSIONALS (WHICH COMPRISE THE BULK OF US REFUGEE POPULATION) WHEREAS THE US HAD FOUND IT RELATIVELY EASY TO ABSORB THESE INDIVIDUALS.

4. IN VIEW FOREGOING, EMBASSY SUGGESTS THAT IN THOSE CASES WHERE REFUGEES ARE SUCCESSFUL IN OBTAINING LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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FRENCH LAISSER PASSER AND VISA, THE HEAD OF HOUSEHOLD BE ENCOURAGED TO PROCEED TO FRANCE SINCE HIS CHANCES OF SETTLING SUCCESSFULLY HERE SHOULD BE EXCELLENT. EMBASSY ALSO CONCURS IN ISSUANCE INS DOCUMENTATION PERMITTING SUCH INDIVIDUALS TO RETURN TO US SHOULD THESE HOPES PROVE UNFOUNDED. OUR EXPERIENCE HOWEVER INDICATES THAT REFUGEES SHOULD BE CAUTIONED AGAINST FLASHING INS DOCUMENTATION IN THE FACES OF LOCAL OFFICIALDOM.

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